

**HSR&D/VISN Implementation Collaborative:
Innovations To Implement Evidence-Based Clinical Practice**

NEW!

This means the information has changed since the October 7th DRAFT solicitation

1. Would research designed to assess the effectiveness of treatment be considered responsive to this solicitation?

No. This announcement **is** designed to create opportunities for collaboration between researchers and senior VISN staff to improve clinical services by: 1) implementing specific evidence-based practices and evaluating the success of that implementation, or 2) conducting organizational changes that would enable the VSN to efficiently implement and support evidence-based practices. The solicitation is **not** intended to implement treatments whose efficacy and effectiveness have not been proven. See the definition of evidence-based practice below for a better understanding of the types of treatments we wish to implement.

2. What is an evidence-based practice?

For our purposes, an evidence-based practice is defined as a treatment that is recognized as effective (beneficial in an applied setting). Effectiveness must be documented in the application, and not during the course of the proposed funded activity. The investigator will have to justify to the review panel that the intended intervention is worth implementing.

3. Will feasibility of implementation be a review criterion?

Yes. Feasibility of the implementation efforts will be an important criterion for proposals focused on implementing an evidence-based practice. Ideally, the applicants would also demonstrate in their Planning Award proposals that the evidence-based practice has already been usefully implemented in sites beyond the site of the original effectiveness studies. In the Final Proposals, applicants will provide a credible plan for exporting this success to other sites.

4. What do you mean by ‘support evidence-based practice implementation’?

Organizational or infrastructure development projects should make it easier to implement a variety of evidence-based practices. These projects may be theoretically driven or drawn from a local analysis of barriers to implementation. This role in facilitating implementation may be tested as part the activity funded in the Final Proposal. In keeping with the applied focus of this announcement, successful ideas are expected to result in real and lasting improvements to the participating networks.

5. Does developing methods to support implementation require full implementation of an evidence-based practice?

Not necessarily. A project seeking to overcome a specific barrier to implementation may be able to empirically determine if that barrier has been removed without necessarily implementing an evidence-based practice. This is a new scientific area. We hope to see innovative, yet feasible and practical approaches. The applicants should describe how their efforts will facilitate the implementation of evidence-based practices and how they will empirically demonstrate this effect.

6. Must investigators hold a VA appointment?

To be a PI or Co-PI you must be eligible for VA research awards. This usually requires a 5/8 time VA appointment or a waiver. Consultants and project staff may be non-VA employees.

7. If 2 or 3 VISNs collaborate with an investigator on an application do they have to split the \$50,000 planning funds and/or the \$300,000 final award?

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The VISNs will split planning awards- \$50,000 max **per planning application**. VISNs may work with more than one research team, but each research team can only submit one application. Final proposal awards will be up to \$300,000 max **per VISN, per research team application**, depending on the number of facilities involved. However, budgetary efficiency will be a review criterion.

8. Is this solicitation open to junior level researchers?

This type of collaborative project is complex and requires considerable research and administrative experience to successfully implement change within a health care system. We expect our merit reviewers to evaluate the credentials of the PIs with the same level of rigor that they would for any complex multi-site, expensive study. We would recommend that a junior researcher would find senior researchers to work with. However, there are no limits based on the experience of the research PI or Co-PI.

9. My proposed implementation study doesn't fit your criteria because it is still in the formative / evaluation stage. Any suggestions?

Research proposal ideas that are not a good fit for this solicitation are still welcome under other solicitations. Please see our website solicitation page at: <http://www.appc1.va.gov/resdev/fr/frrfp/solicitations.cfm> . Also remember you are welcome to submit a Letter of Intent for Investigator Initiated Research without a specific solicitation.

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10. What is intended by VISN matching funds?

We ask, but do not require, that VISNs contribute resources to ensure the success of the final award projects. Their level of support will be an important review criterion. The VISN resource contributions should be described in the budget and in a signed letter from the VISN director. By matching funds, we mean actual expenditures and also resources such as equipment purchase or use, staff time, or other forms of in-kind support.

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11. How many planning awards and final proposals do you expect to fund?

We expect to fund 15-20 planning awards. We hope about 50% of the planning awards will result in fully funded proposals.

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12. I submitted a checklist. Do I need to also submit an Implementation Topic one page summary?

Yes, if you wish us to help you find a partner for your research. We are eliminating the checklist. The one-pager will be a better tool to aid us in matching research partners. See the solicitation for a description of how to construct the one-pager.